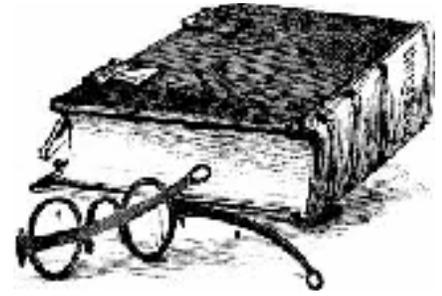


9 Reading Ms. Schaffer Fall 2017



The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.
- Dr. Seuss

- I. Course Description:** This course is designed to provide additional reading support, and will meet during students' lunch periods. However, above all, this course is intended to provide students with engaging, thought-provoking texts, and space to connect to our worlds through reading and writing in a more supportive learning environment.
- **Literature:** Together, we will be working through one of my favorite contemporary novels, *Belzhar* by Meg Wollitzer. In addition to this, I will also be bringing in a variety of interesting and diverse shorter texts from a variety of genres. I invite you all to bring in any topics or texts (including music, poems, plays, etc.) that you find to be relevant and worthy of being ripped apart in our classroom.

II. The Philosophy Driving this Classroom:

A. Reading is not simply about sounding out words, or being able to identify the main idea. Reading is about knowledge, it is about power, and it is about voice. At a time when every force is trying to tear us apart, reading is that thing that unifies us, that allows us to find a safe place, and that gives us the strength we need to raise our voices at a time when silence is simply not an option.

B. I don't believe in standing in front of you all for forty minutes and "teaching" you. Rather, I see myself more as a **facilitator of *aha-moments***: insights that drive and inspire you all to see the content and your worlds a little differently than when you first entered our space. Likewise, since we are a group of both teachers and students, I expect you all to step up to the plate and deliver the same.

C. The classroom is a deeply transformative space; therefore, in order for its full potential to be reached, my expectations and guidelines are as follows:

III. Guidelines & Expectations, or as I prefer to call them, *Schaffer's Steps for Success*:

This class will run like more of a book club than anything. Meaning, we will be working through texts together - articles, poems, song lyrics, full length novels (both in and out of class), and so forth. I expect you to come ready to discuss, ask questions, and help us understand these texts and our worlds in a deeper, more interesting way. This means...

- A. Come prepared, even if it means coming confused:** I don't give pop reading quizzes or multiple choice assessments in which I ask what color a secondary character's scarf was, or anything silly and of that nature. However, I treat this class more like a book club: we are a small community sharing a literary experience, and discussions are crucial and central to what we do. As with real world book clubs, it is super embarrassing to come to the party without having read the material, and I will be asking questions and counting on you all to lead discussions. I would rather you read the material, feel completely lost, and come ask us questions about it, than not even crack the text open at all.
- B. Come accountable; come responsible:** This class is all about independence, accountability, and responsibility. You will see as we dive into the material that my goal is to push you all to become to best thinkers, problem-solvers, and ultimately, the best citizens you can be in this ever-changing, and often tumultuous world. This cannot happen if we are unprepared, unwilling to take risks, and unwilling to give 100% every single day.
- C. Come open-minded and mindful:** This kind of work is deeply personal and may even make us feel somewhat vulnerable and frustrated at times, and that is okay; in fact, it's more than okay - this is typically when we can learn the most. This is a supportive, safe environment for all to take risks, to open up, and to try out ideas, insights, and strategies working towards becoming stronger readers and deeper thinkers. Please be mindful of this intention as you enter this class every day.

IV. What You'll Need: Materials:

- A. 1 notebook:** can be either marble or spiral, totally up to you.
- B. 1 pocket folder**
- C. Post-Its:** you will soon see for yourself that I am a Post-It fanatic, and if there's one office supply in this world that I am emotionally connected to, it's Post-Its.
- D. Pens & Highlighters**

V. Other Highly Important Information!

A. Please know that aside from being your reading/English teacher this semester, I am also here as your person: to support you in whatever ways I can, and to always provide you with the safe space you need during the school day.

B. I will have extra help hours **Mondays & Wednesdays at 2:15 PM in room 235,** and **Thursday mornings at 7:00 AM,** also in **room 235.** If you have trouble making any of these times, please come see me or email me to schedule a convenient time to meet and work together.

C. I have a website! That's right, I am, in fact, a cool, hip, semi-technologically-savvy millennial! If you need any information - assignments, calendars, printable class materials, and so forth, **Schaffer-Scholars.com** is your go-to spot. Additionally, feel free to email me anytime for all of your question/reassurance needs. Like a good neighbor, Ms. Schaffer is there.

I look forward to an awesome, meaningful, transformative semester with you all! Let's get started, shall we?